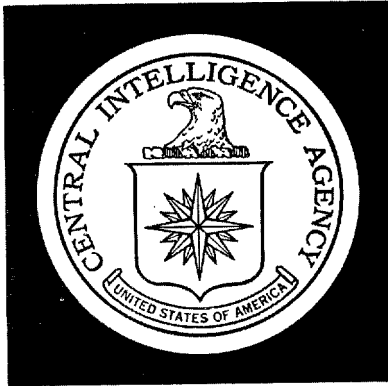


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South Vietnam: Activity by enemy forces was unusually low over the weekend throughout the country, supporting earlier signs that the Communist spring offensive may be nearing its end.

Only scattered incidents of enemy-initiated activity have been reported during the past two days. For the most part, the Communists appear to be avoiding contact with allied units and confining their offensive actions to sporadic shelling and harassment.

It is possible that these tactics are intended to screen the movement of some main force units as they return to more secure areas in South Vietnam and Cambodia. In II and III corps there is evidence that several regiments have withdrawn from their presumed target areas.

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the Saigon area the enemy now intends to concentrate on preparations for a new offensive that is to begin sometime after June. Within the city itself the Communists plan to concentrate on political activity in an attempt to bring about a major uprising in the capital during the summer months.
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Communist China: Chinese news media have given no substantive information on the meeting of the ninth party congress since the first session opened on 1 April.

Radiobroadcasts have been confined to repetition of the initial communiqué listing a presidium for the congress, while Chinese television has merely carried film snippets purporting to show the opening ceremonies in which leaders such as Mao and Lin Piao can be seen but not heard. This virtual news blackout contrasts sharply both with procedures followed at the last Chinese party congress in 1956 and those observed by other ruling Communist parties, suggesting that delegates are engaged in heated debates on policy issues and other matters which the leadership wishes to conceal from the public.

Some information on the proceedings may, however, be released at the conclusion of the congress.

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Singapore-Indonesia: Singapore is encouraged over prospects for improved relations with Indonesia following recent talks in Djakarta.

The talks were held mainly to discuss Singapore's projected contributions to Indonesian economic development, but were also intended to ease lingering tensions between the two countries. Relations deteriorated sharply last October when Singapore executed two Indonesians for paramilitary activity during the "confrontation era." This triggered anti-Chinese riots in Java and caused Indonesia to consider imposing economic sanctions against Singapore.

Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee, who led the Singapore delegation, told US officials that he was highly impressed with President Suharto and his civilian economic advisers. The two countries agreed to undertake projects in Indonesia valued at \$20.7 million, and possibly additional ones worth another \$15 million. The projects range from hotel construction in Bali to manufacturing and assembly plants and agricultural and fishing ventures.

Goh's reasonable attitude apparently contributed to the success of the talks.



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Venezuela: An impasse over the election of two congressional officers illustrates the difficulties President Caldera will have getting legislation through the divided Congress.

The lack of a quorum in the Senate resulting from a boycott by the former governing Democratic Action Party (AD) and several smaller parties is holding up the election of congressional officers. Leaders of the AD are strenuously objecting to the nomination of a supporter of ex-dictator Perez Jimenez for one of the vacant posts.

The deadlock over these elections follows closely an impasse over congressional leadership posts. These squabbles plus general inactivity by the Congress are already hurting its prestige, which will suffer a further decline if the deadlock persists.

Caldera will probably have to compromise on the nominations when Congress meets after the Easter recess, but his troubles will not be over. In late March, six deputies and one senator elected under the Christian Democratic (COPEI) banner announced that they would follow an independent course. Their defection, plus the likelihood that other COPEI congressmen may decide to go their own way in future months, makes Caldera's hope that important legislation will be supported by a consensus difficult to realize.

Caldera will soon have to come to terms with this problem and may be obliged to sacrifice some of his programs in order to win congressional approval for key legislation.

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